

VZCZCXRO3684
PP RUEHRN
DE RUEHRB #0372 1201707
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 301707Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0060
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS 4981
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 0001
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0119
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0493
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0435
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0163
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO 0086
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0073
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0262
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0064
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0044
RUEHWD/AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK 0012
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 4579
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME 0009
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS RABAT 000372

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/OMC - D WARNER-KRAMER
COMMERCE FOR NOAA/NMFS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [AORC](#) [FAO](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: PORT STATES AGREEMENT - MOROCCO WILLING TO DISCUSS

REF: STATE 41661

¶1. (SBU) Econoff conveyed reftel points on the Port States Agreement on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing on April 30 to Director of Maritime Fisheries Zakia Driouiche and Head of the Service of Control and Inspection of Fishing Vessels Mohammed Benbari of Morocco's Department of Maritime Fisheries. Benbari, who will represent Morocco at the May 4-7 Rome consultations, told Econoff that he assessed from prior discussions that developing countries fear that developed countries have ulterior motives in seeking to conclude the agreement outside the FAO Constitutional framework. "We were all surprised" by the proposal that it be removed from that framework, he said.

¶2. (SBU) After Econoff elaborated USG concerns about following the Article XIV framework, Driouiche recommended that the U.S. and other developed countries make a "declaration" to other countries setting out our commitments for assistance, as well as reviewing the pros and cons of the two options and elaborating more clearly our rationale for the proposed structure of the agreement. Developing countries like Morocco, she stated, do not have the resources available to put in place all the measures required by the draft agreement, and will hesitate to sign on to a stand-alone pact without commitments from developed countries to help finance the needed measures.

¶3. (SBU) Benbari observed that developing countries are more comfortable with an agreement under the FAO constitution, as they expect that the formulas exempting the poorest states from contributions under the FAO would be replicated for any measures required by the new agreement. They would be hesitant to accept an agreement outside of the FAO constitutional process absent a declaration of the responsibilities of each state to provide funds, he predicted. Morocco will "do our part and try to understand the U.S. perspective," Driouiche promised.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Although the Moroccan representatives emphasized their "surprise" at the proposal to take the agreement out of the FAO context, for now they appear to be open to the possibility. Post recommends that USG

representatives at the Rome consultations reach out to Benbari with more details on how the agreement, and signatories to it, will benefit under our proposal. Morocco may be willing to mediate with countries who are less willing at first to accept our proposal. Any commitments the U.S. or other developing countries can make now to technical assistance in implementing the agreement will go a long way to winning acceptance.

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Jackson